# SIKKIM

# GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

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**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

**Office of the PCCF-cum-Secretary**

**Department of Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management**

**Forest Secretariat, Deorali, Gangtok –737102, Sikkim**

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## NOTIFICATION

**Subject:** **State Government Directive on Decentralization and Universalization of Joint Forest Management in Sikkim by making village level JFMCs at Panchayat ward level with the Ward Panchayat Member as the ex-officio JFM President**

Forests in Sikkim are an important source of livelihood and ecological security. Decentralization of the state forestry sector gained momentum since 2002 with the formation of 155 Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC) and 49 Ecodevelopment Committees (EDC) and 7 Forest Development Agencies in the state till date.

Ministry of Environment and Forests has also requested to form JFMCs in all the forest fringe villages. Decentralization and Universalization of the Joint Forest Management in the state is possible if all the forest fringe villages are brought under the JFM network. This is specially relevant in the context of Sikkim considering the fact that 84% of the total geographical area of the state is forest land and under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department. There are a total of 907 villages (Gram Panchayat Wards) in the state and because of the large extent of forests, every village is a fringe forest village with Khasmahal, Goucharan and Reserve Forests. The state government has taken a decision to bring all of them under the JFM network with the creation of 907 JFMC at the village level. This will also foster better linkages with the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The district wise breakup of the village based JFMCs is as follows:

| S. No. | District | No of Villages (Panchayat wards) | No of JFMC/EDC to be created |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | South District | 255 | 255 |
| 2 | East District | 275 | 275 |
| 3 | West District | 274 | 274 |
| 4 | North District | 103 | 103 |
| | | **Total** | **907** |

For better linkages with the Panchayats who are the constitutional bodies and reducing the multiplicity of local institutions in the village level, the Ward Panchayat Member shall function as the ex-officio JFMC President. This will ensure mainstreaming of conservation in the larger framework of developmental programmes of the government. The concerned Forest Block Officer shall be the member secretary of this village level JFMC. This village level JFMC shall also be the nodal agency for all programmes related to forests, Landuse and environment, medicinal plants, watershed, wildlife and biodiversity. The same village level JFMC shall also function as the village landuse committee, watershed committee, biodiversity management committee and implement all other forestry programmes of the state. They shall also receive collateral funding from government and other sources.

Based on the above state government directive, forest decentralization and universalization has to be initiated in a more systematic manner. This will involve restructuring of the existing 204 JFMC/EDC to panchayat ward level with the concerned ward panchayat member as the JFMC/EDC President and block officer as the member secretary in a consultative manner within a period of 6 months. For this the concerned CEOs of FDAs have to delineate the panchayat wards to avoid the duplication. A panchayat ward should not have both a JFMC and an EDC.

**By Order**

**T. R. Poudyal, IFS**
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